

Weekly GOP radio address: Sen. James talks about funding mental health resources

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Hello everyone. My name is State Senator Jesse James, and I represent the great people of the 23rd Senate District. This session, I will be the chair of the Senate's brand new Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Children and Families Committee.

I am proud the Senate is dedicating a committee to Mental Health, and we need to continue the conversations about how we can do better in Wisconsin. If you're alive and breathing, chances are that you, a friend, or someone you love has been affected by mental health issues, especially in the last two years. We all know the fallout from COVID and our current economy have increased anxiety and stress for people of all ages.

This stress has caused ripple effects. We have seen an increase in mental health calls, an increase of substance abuse issues and overdose deaths in our state. Our children and teens have been especially affected by mental health issues. I have seen the toll that trauma and emergency work has taken on my fellow first responders.

I found it uplifting that both Governor Evers and Senate Majority Leader LeMahieu mentioned the need to fund mental health resources in our schools and communities. In our last budget cycle, we increased mental health funding by millions of dollars, both in schools and for regional mental health bed expansions.

But mental health goes beyond us passing bills. We can all take part by simply checking in with each other. By that I mean if you have something you are

struggling with, you need to “spill your guts” and share it with someone. Don’t walk alone, and check in with those you love and make sure they know that they’re not alone. Ask tough questions.

Fighting for mental health is fighting for our future. We’re going to give it our all this session. Thank you and God Bless.